

Austria the Disintegrating Empire

Ancient Interpretation of Letters on Hapsburg Armorial Bearings About to Be Realized

EVER since the fourteenth century the interpretation of the five vowels, A, E, I, O, U, which figure on the armorial bearings of the sovereign house of Austria, has furnished a subject for discussion and conjecture. These cabalistic letters, which may be described as the heraldic motto of Emperor Charles, are to be found on all palaces and buildings belonging to the crown, and were first used for this particular purpose in 1302 by Emperor Albert I., son of Rudolf of Hapsburg.

According to some the initials stood for "Albertus Electus Imperator Optimus Vivat," the V being often used as U in medieval script. According to others they were intended to mean "Austria Est Imperare Orbi Universo." But there is an old time and popular saying, according to which the letters stand for German instead of for Latin words, and are to the effect that "Alle Erst Ist Oestreich Verdorben," which may be translated as "It is Austria who will go under (or perish) first."

Case Is Different in Austria.

To-day the sixteen nationalities subject to the sceptre that has come down to Emperor Charles from Emperor Charlemagne through eleven centuries are more than ever convinced that the German interpretation of the letters is the correct one, and that Austria as an empire is about to go under, the first of the Central or enemy Powers. For although Bulgaria has withdrawn from her alliance with the two Kaisers and surrendered to the Entente, her monarchy thus far remains intact and may be permitted to continue its existence after making certain territorial sacrifices. But with the Dual Empire the case is different. President Wilson's reply to the Austrian note last week, a reply indorsed by France and Great Britain commits the Powers of the Entente to the dismemberment not alone of Austria, but also of Hungary.

Austria has always been unenviably celebrated for her hesitancy, her unreliability and, above all, for her unpunctuality. She has always been too late, no matter whether on the battlefield or in her affairs of state. These shortcomings were a source of mingled exasperation and contempt to the first Napoleon and to the Iron Chancellor, Prince Bismarck, as well as of despair to the sovereign States of southern Germany, who in the six weeks war of 1866 were left to face the Prussians unaided, although they had espoused the cause of the house of Hapsburg.

Emperor's Concession Too Late.

Had Emperor Charles issued at the beginning of the present year his pledge to federalize the various nations subject to his crown, granting to each of them home rule, he might have saved the greater portion of his twin monarchies. His proclamation making this concession last week came too late to be of avail. For the Powers of the Entente have definitely and officially committed themselves to the full independence of the Czech-Slovaks of Austria and of Hungary, and have recognized the Czech-Slovak provisional Government, with Prof. Thomas G. Masaryk, the Bohemian patriot, as President, with Milan Stefanik, the celebrated astronomer, who has fought his way up from a mere private to the rank of General in the French army in the present war, as Minister of National Defence, and with Dr. Edward Benes as Minister of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior.

An army of Czech-Slovaks recruited from among former soldiers serving by compulsion in the Austrian and Hungarian forces has been defending the cause of the Entente in Siberia and Russia. Another large contingent of Czech-Slovaks is undergoing military training under its own flag here in the New World. Many thousands more of them have been for the past three or four years on the French front, and while the latest proclamation of the provisional Government is dated from Paris we may receive at any moment another proclamation dated from the Hradecany, the ancient palace of the Kings of Bohemia at Prague. For according to stories that come by cable via Holland,



Count Julius Andrássy

Scandinavia and Switzerland, all Bohemia is already in a state of revolution and Prague in the hands of the insurgents. Incidentally it may be added that the Administration at Washington has made an initial advance of \$13,000,000 to the provisional Czech-Slovak Government.

The Powers of the Entente are in the same way committed, not to the autonomy but to the complete independence of the Slavs of Croatia, Slavonia, Carniola, Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Jugo-Slav nation, united by ties of their own determining with the restored Kingdom of Serbia, and under the sceptre of a ruler of their own choice, namely, the gallant Crown Prince and Regent Alexander of Serbia, who has given evidence of military capacity and political sagacity in the present Armageddon, as well as in the two Balkan wars by which it was preceded.

The Entente is also pledged to the independence of Poland, a considerable portion of which has been embraced in the Dual Empire. Italy is known to have received the approval of her allies for her pretensions to the Italian speaking provinces of Emperor Charles, long known as "the Italia Irredenta," while the millions of Rumanians of Transylvania who have been subjected to oppression and persecution by the Hungarian Government are appealing to the Entente for liberation from their bondage and for their incorporation into their motherland, Rumania.

Hungary Also Seems Doomed.

From this it will be seen that not only Austria but likewise Hungary is definitely doomed to dismemberment, and this not alone by the imposition of the will of the Entente, but what is much more to the point, by the will of the very people hitherto subject to the house of Hapsburg. That the disruption should thus come, not alone from without, but also from within, is due largely to the policy pursued by most of the sovereigns of the House of Hapsburg and by their leading statesmen at Vienna, a policy fostered by Berlin ever since the days of Frederick the Great.

It is a policy which has been summed up in the Latin words "divide et impera," which may be rendered in English as "sow dissension among them so that you may rule." Instead of endeavoring to allay the antipathies and the jealousies among the sixteen nationalities embraced in the Dual Empire it has been the policy of its monarchs, and of their ministers, to foster racial distrust and hate and to play them off one against another. Emperor Francis II. used actually to boast

that "my peoples are foreigners to one another. From their antipathies comes order, and peace from their mutual dislikes."

Czech, Hungarian, Rumanian, Pole, Croat, Serb, Slovak and Slovenian, Austrian and Tyrolean, and even the Magyar, if left alone, would be peaceable neighbors. But this might have resulted in their forming a coalition against the Viennese Government powerful enough to force its hand, and that was a thing to be avoided at all costs.

In 1870 when Bohemia had a chance for equal recognition with Hungary, Francis Joseph repudiated the pledge and accepted Count Julius Andrássy, a Magyar, as Chancellor.

Of the twin monarchies Austria may inspire some pity. There has always been a feeling among the nations of the Entente that she was forced into the present war against her will. Assuredly the late Emperor Francis Joseph was bitterly averse thereto and anxious to end in peace his unhappy life, darkened as it was by many tragedies.

Unwilling Slave of Germany.

Until the time of Italy's entry into the war in May, 1915, strenuous efforts were made both by France and by England to detach Austria from her alliance with Germany, owing to the conviction that she was the unwilling slave, rather than the partner of Germany in the fray. Even after that, at any rate until the summer of 1916, these efforts were continued with the understanding that if Austria withdrew she would have to make certain territorial sacrifices to Italy. President Wilson delayed proclaiming war upon Austria for months after the United States had broken with Germany, hoping that Austria could be detached from Germany. But although there is reason to believe that Emperor Charles and especially his Bourbon consort, Empress Zita, were anxious for a separate peace, they either lacked the courage or the forces arrayed against them were too powerful to overcome, and the time when they might have saved themselves by a separate peace went by.

These forces were those of Germany and of Hungary. Whatever may be the sentiment toward Austria there should be no sympathy wasted upon Hungary. There has been a tendency in America, but not in France, Great Britain or Italy to regard the Magyars as among the enslaved nationalities of the Dual Monarchy eager for and entitled to freedom and independence. As a matter of fact the Hun-

Wilson's Note the Last Straw—Ages Old History of Hesitation Repeated Too Often

garians are not among the oppressed, but assuredly among the oppressors; not among the persecuted, but among the persecutors.

The lot of the people of Alsace-Lorraine while under the sway of the Kaiser, that of the Poles under the rule of the Russian Czars and that of the Italian speaking population of the Italia Irredenta provinces of Austria has been mild compared to that of the unfortunate Croats, Slovenes, Transylvanians and Slovaks beneath the tyranny of the Magyars. It is not for nothing that the country over which they rule is known as Hungary; that is to say, the Land of the Hun.

Intimate relations have always existed between the Magyars and the Prussians. Hungary's great revolution of 1848 and 1849 was largely financed and directed from Berlin in pursuance of the Hohenzollern traditional policy of weakening Austria. The war of 1866 was undertaken by Bismarck largely with the intention of sapping the strength of Austria to such an extent that she would be compelled to yield to the demands of the Magyars for partial independence. Bismarck, and after his downfall Emperor William, all along made it their business to strengthen Hungary against Austria. They held that by fostering the differences between the two moieties of the Dual Empire and by encouraging the ambition of the Magyars to render Vienna subordinate to Budapest they were converting the twin Hapsburg monarchies into a tool for Hohenzollern militarism. For Germany, or rather Prussia, could always overawe Austria and bend her to her will by supporting the Hungarians.

Eitel Suggested for King.

It was a Hungarian statesman who concluded with Bismarck in 1879 the alliance which bound the Hapsburgs to the chariot of their former vassals and retainers, the Hohenzollerns. Every new concession demanded by Budapest from Vienna was encouraged and abetted from Berlin; and to such an extent did Emperor William pay court to the Hungarians that at one moment his second son, Prince Eitel, was seriously discussed in the German and in the Magyar press as a likely king of Hungary.

Tisza, the most masterful of Hungarian statesmen, was flattered and petted by Emperor William until he became his boondoggle ally and confederate if not his creature, and it was Tisza who, as Premier of Hungary, at the instigation of the Kaiser at Berlin forced Emperor Francis Joseph and the Government at Vienna into the declaration of war upon Serbia, which precipitated the present world conflict.

When the Powers of the Entente assembled around the council board to dictate, not negotiate, the conditions of a lasting peace they are likely to bear in mind the saying of a wise and sagacious old statesman who was wont to insist that Hungary, or rather the minority Magyar element of the kingdom of St. Stephen, was the backbone of Hohenzollern imperialism and of the Kaiser's project for the military, the political and above all the economic mastery of the entire world.

Lucinda's Experiences

"WHAT would you say if I should tell you," said Lucinda, "that a conductor, a trolley car conductor, had addressed me as 'My dear'? Would you believe that possible? And yet just that happened to me to-day."

"When I came to the avenue, where I wanted to take a car, I found the line blocked, and the car nearest to me so hemmed in that I couldn't see its destination mark. So I asked the conductor, who was standing on the platform, 'Does this car go to Soandso?' and the conductor answered:

"No, my dear, you want to take the next car back."

"Awful! But wait a minute. This was a woman conductor; a nice woman she was, too; her calling me 'my dear' simply indicated her inclination to be nice and friendly."